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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on a study of teacher development practices in Turkey, exploring teachers' perceptions of professional development opportunities in the Turkish elementary school, and the extent to which elementary school teachers believe that these opportunities have helped them improve their instructional practices. Of the 500 teachers from 52 schools in the sample, 313 (64 percent) returned usable questionnaires. Data analysis revealed that most teachers had participated in inservice training only once or twice during their careers, and that rural teachers had less access to inservice training activities than urban school teachers. Survey respondents overwhelmingly agreed that more inservice training activities should be organized and made available, and that the evaluation reports prepared by administrators and supervisors were not very encouraging in helping teachers to grow professionally. Almost half believed that experienced teachers do not help new teachers, although they felt that experienced teachers should give such help. A majority of respondents said that they got together occasionally for professional purposes; most teachers reported they do not have access to professional publications. Findings suggested that some inservice training workshops were conducted just for formality's sake, and that teachers did not apply what they had learned. Results of the study indicated that teachers in Turkey are willing to share their expertise although systems are not organized and structured to make this happen. (Contains 20 references.) (ND)

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Exploring Elementary School Teachers' Perceptions of Professional Development: The Turkish Case

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Exploring Elementary School Teachers' Perceptions of Professional Development: The Turkish Case

Introduction

Teachers and the quality of their teaching are much in the news today both in the United States and in Turkey, and are likely to keep their significance in the near future. Current studies in the United States (The Holmes Group, 1986) tell us again and again that student performance will not improve if the quality of teaching is not improved. However, the quality of teaching in schools cannot be significantly improved without improving the quality of teachers. A teacher who has opportunities to learn and to grow can provide more opportunities for young people (Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987). Therefore, supporting the continual development of teachers is important to improving the quality of teachers and the quality of their teaching.

The concept of professional development, defined as the knowledge, skills, abilities and necessary conditions for teacher learning on the job (Lieberman & Miller, 1992) has been one of the most important factors in improving education efforts. Recent literature on the improvement of the teaching profession suggests that professional development is a necessity for better teaching and better schools (Zumwalt, 1986). Therefore, to improve the quality of teaching, teachers should be given opportunities to grow professionally.

Darling-Hammond (1987) suggests that the surest way to improved instruction is a formal system of teachers helping teachers. She states that "Every recent evaluation of the growing number of mentor teacher programs underscores the usefulness of having teachers help other teachers." (p. 5). She is echoed by Futrell (1988) who suggests that effective instruction requires systematic school-wide programs in which all teachers help all teachers.

It has also been argued that professional development should be an ongoing process as part of daily teaching (Lieberman & Miller, 1992). As part of this ongoing process, mentor teaching and peer coaching can be viewed as different ways for professional development where not only beginning and experienced teachers are involved in professional relationships but where all teachers —new, experienced, and expert teachers— are learning, questioning, and reflecting.

The issue of teacher development has been addressed to a limited degree in Turkish education literature. Up to now, the focus was more on the pre-service training of teachers, with little emphasis on in-service training. Whenever there has been a complaint about the quality of education, remedies have been directed toward the educational programs at teacher colleges.

However, the questions of how teachers improve themselves, how they help each other in this process, and what kind of assistance they get from administrators and supervisors have not been closely investigated. How much access teachers have to in-service training and how useful it is for them in practice has also not been addressed adequately. These questions usually were answered

by administrators at the top of the hierarchy in the centralized educational system, but teachers' perceptions of the issue usually were not investigated.

Researchers, administrators from the Ministry of Education, and educators from universities and other institutions have emphasized the need for and significance of teacher development. However, what needs to be done is usually not clear because teachers' opinions and needs are not described well. The recent Turkish literature on teacher education has dealt with the inadequacies in the preparation of teachers in the teachers' colleges. However, little attention has been devoted to teachers' professional development while they are in a teaching/learning setting. Teachers have not been asked about their needs, problems, and concerns. Moreover, teachers' perceptions of their professional development opportunities, and whether they are aware of the sources they have in their own schools are not known. Therefore, this study will investigate teachers' perceptions of teacher development practices in Turkey while trying to answer the above questions, and finding out more about teachers' perceptions of their own professional development.

The following questions were main research questions in this study:

1- What are teachers' perceptions of professional development opportunities that exist in the Turkish elementary schools?

2- To what extent do elementary school teachers believe that various teacher development opportunities help them to improve their instructional practices in the classroom?

An Overview of Some Issues in the Turkish Educational System Related to Elementary School Teacher Development

Before going into the methods, a brief overview of the Turkish educational system will be given, and then, existing problems with teachers' pre-service education and the need for in-service training will be presented. Finally, research conducted on in-service activities is explored.

General Characteristics of the Turkish Educational System

Turkey has a highly centralized educational system. The Minister of Education, in the capital, Ankara, is the head of the school system. All important policy and administrative decisions including the appointment of teachers and administrators, the selection of textbooks, and the selection of subjects for the curriculum are made by the Ministry of Education. A national curriculum is followed in every school and all educational activities are controlled by the supervisors appointed by the Minister of Education.

All elementary school teachers are hired and appointed to the provinces by the Ministry of Education. Local appointments are done in provinces by the Provincial Board of Education. The assignments of teachers to the schools are done according to criteria set up by the Board. For example, first year teachers generally are not assigned to preferred urban areas unless there is a

specific need for teachers, or unless teachers have legitimate excuses such as health problems. Inexperienced teachers are usually posted to rural schools.

Teachers' applications for appointment are processed according to their past record (i.e. experience, scores) and their supervisors' assessment. Teachers' experience (the number of years they have worked), the degrees they received, the in-service training programs they attended, and reports they were given by the supervisors are converted into scores which affect their candidacy for a position. At the end of every academic year, a report is filled out for every teacher by the supervisors (school principal, governor, elementary school supervisor, and the president of the City Board of Education). Based on these reports teachers could get promotions and therefore an increase in salary.

Recent Developments and Problems in Teacher Education

Until the early 1970s, Normal Schools were the main source for teacher training in Turkey. After the early 1970s, Normal Schools were transformed into "High Schools of Teaching". Those schools which accepted students either after elementary or middle school education were mostly boarding schools. When these schools stopped functioning as teacher training schools and became regular high schools in 1976, the training of elementary school teachers was completely left to two-year teacher training institutes which were originally established in the late 1960s while High Schools of Teaching were still in the system. More recently, the status of these post secondary institutions was also changed, and the duration of training was raised to four years. In addition to these changes, the Ministry of Education has also decided to give scholarships to students who chose to study in one of the teacher training institutions (Teacher Colleges). Students who indicate that a Teacher College is among his/her first 10 selections on the central national university examination are awarded the scholarship. All these efforts have aimed to make the teaching profession more valuable, and to give it the credibility it deserves, since it has lost so much credit recently because of changes in social, economical and cultural structures.

In order to establish a productive teaching process, there are certain basic qualifications that a teacher must possess before teaching in elementary schools. Presently, in Turkey, the quality of instruction in the elementary schools is suffering because, as mentioned above, the elementary school teacher population is very diverse. A large portion of elementary school teachers have only high school level training. Some have junior college level education, and only a small portion of them have college level education.

Needs for Professional Development and In-service Training

Lack of professional development opportunities has been a major problem for teachers in improving themselves. Teachers do not have opportunities to participate in in-service training courses, or to get involved in staff development activities; nor do they have access to professional

publications to improve their knowledge.

In Turkey, teachers are usually overwhelmed by the heavy demands of the profession. Besides such problems as overcrowded classrooms, and poor physical conditions of schools; teachers do not have enough teaching materials nor access to professional publications and libraries. Educational publications especially prepared for teachers to inform them of such new professional practices as student evaluation, teaching methods, use of audio-visual materials, and laboratory techniques are not widely available. Therefore, the only resource teachers can utilize is their own knowledge and experience which usually has been gained from teacher training institutions some years earlier. In addition, the financial difficulties that teachers face is yet another burden which taken with the above factors has served to make teachers lonely and helpless public workers trying to perform their task successfully.

Moreover, there are not many in-service training opportunities for teachers if they want to improve their professional knowledge and the effectiveness of their performance. Only a small number of teachers have the chance to attend the in-service training activities organized by the Ministry of Education for teachers to help them to acquire new educational knowledge and innovations (Karagozoglu, 1986).

In-service training programs in Turkey are financed centrally by the Ministry of Education. However, while the nation-wide ones are planned by the in-service division of the Ministry of Education, local activities are undertaken by the Board of Education in each province. The in-service training department determines priorities each year and plans the annual program. Since the in-service activities generally do not address the concerns of teachers, teachers are generally dissatisfied with the quality of the programs.

Another reason why in-service training activities are not very helpful is that there are no follow-up activities. Teachers are expected to apply what they have learned in the in-service training programs in their classroom without getting any direct help. Because there is no professional help available in their schools, teachers are overwhelmed and even after attending an in-service training activity, they do things in the old way. In other words, generally these activities do not bring much change in practice. In addition, since the possibility for a classroom teacher to attend an in-service program (usually in a summer camp) is very limited, teachers who are selected to participate in in-service activities consider it a privilege, and usually do not complain about the quality of the programs or the absence of the follow-up activities.

Since the in-service activities which are offered by the Ministry of Education are very limited, during the 1960s a project called "Training Teachers on the Job" was introduced. How long this project lasted and how successful it was could not be verified. Basaran (1963), who was among the organizers of this project, states that one of the ways for solving teachers' problems is getting teachers involved in their own training on the job. He claims that training on the job requires teachers' participation in the process. He further adds that without having them willingly involved

in, nothing can force them to be productive and successful. In order for training on the job to be successful, teachers should be involved in the planning of the activities, be given some responsibilities, and be active in the whole process.

Basaran (1963) believes that teachers should not be left alone in solving their problems. Principals, supervisors, the Board of Education directors, and other Ministry of Education staff, he suggests, should help teachers. However, he forgets the fact that, administrative personnel, and supervisors either may not have enough time, or may not know how to be helpful. In addition, since the administrative personnel are superiors of teachers, teachers may not feel comfortable working with them. Therefore, having the administrative personnel or supervisors involved in teachers training on the job may not work effectively.

Research Conducted on Professional Development of Teachers

Basaran (1966) describes in-service training as "activities a professional does to train him/herself while on the job or activities which a professional participated in to be trained" (p. 13). In fact, every single activity that involves training of a person on the job is seen as in-service activity. Thus, it has a much broader meaning in the Turkish context than the US. However, there is not much research done on professional development of elementary school teachers in Turkey, or on finding out teachers' opinion on various issues about their own career growth.

One nation-wide research study which was conducted in 1964 by the In-service Education Division of the Ministry of Education was aimed at finding out teachers' in-service training needs and whether current in-service activities address the real needs and problems of teachers (Basaran, 1966). The research participants were 8,952 elementary and secondary school teachers and some elementary school supervisors.

The in-service division of the Ministry of Education, after evaluating reports filled out by the participants and some organizers of some summer in-service training activities, have found out that these activities were not successful and did not reach their projected goals. From these evaluation reports it was understood that these activities were done just for formality, and that neither teachers nor administrators were interested in joining these programs. Many teachers also complain that they were not involved in the preparation process. Therefore, the Ministry of Education decided to conduct research to find out the problems in in-service training programs and to explore the possibilities of how they could be improved.

Some of the findings of this research are very interesting in terms of topics teachers wanted to be covered in in-service training programs. It was interesting to see that about 30 years ago teachers voiced their opinion in terms of the type of in-service training activities they prefer and among a number of options given, they selected "the ways teachers improve themselves personally and professionally" as the most important activity they wanted to learn about. Some of the other activities the participants selected were "using audio-visual materials, using instructional

materials, child psychology, creating instructional materials, and learning the new developments in education."

Another finding of this research was about the function and the role of supervisors. Over 80 percent of the participants wanted the current system to be changed, and most of them stated that they wanted the supervisors perform as "educational "consultant".

In terms of the activities that could be useful in in-service training, some of the suggestions teachers made were; "visiting experienced teachers' classes", "making professional trips", "giving teachers opportunity to do research together as groups to find solutions to their professional problems", "having professional meetings among teachers who teach the same grade", and "giving teachers opportunity to work together to share their ideas, problems, and concerns, and finding solutions to them". Similar findings were observed in a study conducted by Grant and Zeichner (1981) on in-service support for first year teachers where teachers highly valued the informal interactions with other teachers in their buildings, who taught at the same grade level.

These findings show that teachers do want to improve themselves and want to learn the ways to do so. However, their enthusiasm about this topic have not been addressed sufficiently. Since there was not follow-up research, how the findings of this research were reflected in in-service training activities is not known. The Ministry of Education (MOE), however, has been conducting more research on how useful the in-service training activities were. Some of the survey questionnaires which the MOE used for this purpose were located, but the reports that were (supposed to be) prepared, after the surveys were sent to the teachers who participated in in-service training activities and to some of the organizers, were not available.

Method

A survey was used to collect data on teachers' perceptions of professional development opportunities, activities in which they are involved, their comments and recommendations.

The questionnaire consisted of three sections. The first section of the questionnaire included questions to retrieve demographic information about participants, such as the type of the school in which they work, their gender, their educational background, experience in teaching, the number of years of teaching in the current school, and the grades taught. The information received through the questions in this section were used in the analysis of differences in the perceptions of teachers in regard to each research questions.

The questions in the second section addressed teachers' perceptions of the existence of professional development opportunities. Availability and usefulness of staff development opportunities, professional relationships with administrators and supervisors, the ways teachers help each other for the purpose of improving each other's teaching skills, and the school culture as a whole were covered in this section. Teachers' beliefs and feelings about their professional

development, and their perceptions for various activities that could help them to improve their instructional practices in their classrooms were measured in the third section of the questionnaire.

Population and Sample Selection

The population of this study includes all public elementary school teachers in the province of Ankara, Turkey. A representative sample of 500 subjects from 52 schools was selected. The selection of the sample was done systematically from two alphabetized lists provided by the City Board of Education. The two lists, one for the city schools, and one for the village schools, included all the elementary schools in the Ankara province. Equal representation in terms of gender, educational background, experience in teaching could not be guaranteed because the selection was done manually and the lists did not have the information on these characteristics for teachers.

The researcher decided to send the questionnaire to a sample of 400 teachers from city schools, and 100 teachers from village schools in order to have a representative group of primary school teachers in the Ankara province (i.e., a stratified sampling procedure based on school type was used). Since the return rate for village schools was expected to be much more lower than the rate for city schools, the proportion was decided accordingly.

Based on the lists provided by the City Board of Education, schools were selected randomly by picking every tenth school from each alphabetized list (i.e. a systematic sampling procedure was used). Since a computerized selection was not possible, the selection was done manually. The lists included how many teachers worked at each school; by adding up the number of teachers working at each selected school, the researcher stopped the selection process when 400 teachers were reached in city schools and 100 teachers were reached in village schools. In schools where there were split sections, only one section was selected. As a result of this selection process, 22 city schools and 30 village schools were chosen. Then, the survey questionnaires were mailed or distributed in person to five hundred teachers in those schools.

Data Collection

The questionnaires were mailed/distributed to teachers in the sample selected in November 1994 after the permission to administer the survey in the schools in Ankara province was obtained from the Ministry of Education. In the selected schools, all teachers were given the questionnaire. In the city schools, the researcher's assistants distributed the survey questionnaires to the teachers in person with the permission from the school administrators. The teachers were told that the surveys would be collected the following week. The research assistants visited each city school twice after they distributed the questionnaires. On their first visit, the assistants collected the completed questionnaires, and reminded the teachers who had not completed the surveys, or could not locate it at that time to have them ready by their next visit. The follow-up procedures in village schools was done by sending teachers reminder postcards six weeks after the questionnaires were mailed. The reminder postcards were not sent to those who identified their

names or schools on the survey questionnaires received by that date. However, all 43 surveys received from the village school teachers had already come before the reminder postcards were sent; no more surveys were received from village schools after the reminder postcards were mailed out.

Data Analysis Procedures

The data collected through the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. All responses to close-ended items were entered for computer analysis. Statistical analysis of the data was done according to the research questions. First, frequency distributions and percentages for each item were reported. The questionnaire was also analyzed in terms of the relationships between different variables, such as school type and size, gender, educational background, experience in teaching, and grade level teaching, and teachers' perceptions of professional development opportunities.

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

According to State Institute of Statistics (1995), there were 1,113 elementary schools in the Ankara province in the 1992-1993 school year; 307 were city schools and 806 were village schools. The questionnaire was sent to a sample of 400 teachers from city schools, and 100 teachers from village schools in order to have a representative group of primary school teachers in the Ankara province.

A total of 322 questionnaires were returned/collected. Since 9 of the returned surveys had too many unanswered questions/statements, these surveys were not used in the analyses. The 313 usable questionnaires provided a 64 percent return rate. The return rate from city schools was 69 percent, and from village schools 43 %. Full demographic characteristics of the sample are shown in Table 1 and in Table 2. Due to missing data, the N's vary somewhat over categories.

As Table 1 displays, 86 percent of the study participants were from urban schools and about 14 percent from rural schools. These numbers match with the percentages of all urban and rural school teachers in primary schools in Ankara province, which were 88 percent and 12 percent respectively. That is, a representative sample was obtained. While 61 percent of the respondents were female, 39 percent were male. These percentages also match with the percentages of all female and male teachers in primary schools in Ankara province, 62 percent and 37 percent respectively.

The majority of the teachers (85 %)who responded to the questionnaire were educated at the junior college level, and most of them (75 %) had more than 15 years of experience. As displayed in Table 1, a majority of the participants (60 %) had been at their current school for 5 years or less, and most of them (78 %) had worked in both urban and rural environments. In terms of the number of teachers working in the schools this questionnaire was administered, almost one half of the schools (48 %) had 51 or more teachers, 6 percent of them had only 1 teacher, 11 percent had 2-5 teachers, 16 percent had 6-25 teachers, and 19 percent had 26-50 teachers.

Table 1: Distribution of Teachers by Background Variables

	Frequency	Percent
School Type		
Urban School	270	86.3
Rural School	43	13.7
	N = 313*	100.0
Number of Teachers in the School		
1 Teacher	20	6.4
2 - 5 Teachers	35	11.2
6 - 25 Teachers	50	15.9
26 - 50 Teachers	58	18.6
51 and more	150	47.9
	N = 313*	100.0
Gender of Teacher		
Male	121	39.2
Female	188	60.8
	N = 309*	100.0
Educational Background		
Normal School	11	3.7
Junior College	256	85.0
Bachelor of Arts Degree	31	10.3
Graduate School	3	1.0
	N = 301*	100.0
Experience in Teaching		
1 - 5 Years	24	7.7
6 - 10 Years	25	8.0
11 - 15 Years	28	8.9
16 - 25 Years	159	50.8
26 and more	77	24.6
	N = 313*	100.0
Number of Years at the Current School		
1 - 5 Years	185	59.9
6 - 10 Years	77	25.0
11 - 24 Years	47	15.1
	N = 309*	100.0
Type of School Worked		
Urban Schools	36	11.8
Rural Schools	31	10.2
Both Urban and Rural Schools	238	78.0
	N = 305*	100.0
Grade Level Teaching		
Pre-School	5	1.6
1st Grade	46	14.9
2nd Grade	52	16.9
3rd Grade	60	19.5
4th Grade	54	17.6
5th Grade	35	11.4
Administrator	10	3.2
No Class	15	4.9
Special Education Classes	2	.6
Combined Classes	29	9.4
	N = 308*	100.0
Years of Teaching the Current Grade		
0 Year	24	8.5
1 Year	84	29.7
2 Years	54	19.1
3 Years	40	14.1
4 Years	36	12.7
5 Years	32	11.3
6 and more (7 to 20 Years)	13	4.6
	N = 283*	100.0

*Note: N's vary somewhat due to missing data.

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Table 2: Relationships Between Educational Background, School Type, and Gender and Participants' Experience in Teaching

Experience in Teaching	School Type				χ^2	Gender				χ^2	Educational Background				χ^2
	Urban School		Rural School			Male		Female			Junior Coll. and Below		College and Above		
	N	%	N	%	(p)	N	%	N	%	(p)	N	%	N	%	(p)
1 to 5 years	5	1.9	19	44.2	161.14**	10	8.3	14	7.4	10.39**	10	3.7	14	41.2	60.58**
6 to 10 years	10	3.7	15	34.9		14	11.6	11	5.9		19	7.1	4	11.8	
11 to 15 years	23	8.5	5	11.6		12	9.9	16	8.5		24	9.0	2	5.9	
16 to 25 years	156	57.8	3	7.0		49	40.5	109	58.0		144	53.9	8	23.5	
26 years +	76	28.1	1	2.3		36	29.8	38	20.2		70	26.2	6	17.6	

$(p < .01)^{**}$ $(p < .05)^{*}$

Most of the participants were teaching grade levels 1 to 5 with a relatively even distribution across grades. The rest included pre-school teachers (2 %), administrators (3 %), teachers with no classes (5 %), special education class teachers (.6 %), and combined class teachers (9 %).

About one half of the respondents (49 %) reported that they had been teaching their current grade level for one or two years. More than one third of them (38 %) had been teaching their current grade level for 3 to 5 years, and 5 percent of them had taught the grade level they were currently teaching for 7 to 20 years, and the rest (8 %) had not taught the grade level they were currently teaching before.

The data suggest that the average teacher sampled for the study was a female urban school teacher who had an associate degree, with 20 years of experience in teaching, and she has been teaching on an elementary third grade level for about three years. The school in which this typical participant had been working had 45 teachers.

Results

The findings of this study are presented in three sections. The first section describes the demographic characteristics of the participants in the study. In the second section through the third sections, the two research questions are addressed. The second section discusses teachers' perceptions of professional development opportunities that exist in the Turkish elementary schools, availability and usefulness of current in-service activities, professional relationships with administrators and supervisors, and teachers' engagement with each other for the purpose of professional growth. The third section examines teachers' perceptions of teacher development opportunities that would help teachers improve their instructional practices in the classroom.

Summary of the Responses to the Questionnaire Items

The survey questionnaire consisted of 58 questions and statements. Ten of the questions in section I were used to find out the demographic characteristics of the subjects. Twenty four questions in section II were aimed at finding teachers' perceptions of professional development opportunities that exist in the Turkish elementary schools. Finally, twenty four questions in section III tried to explore teachers' beliefs about various teacher development opportunities for improving teachers' instructional practices in the classroom.

Teachers' Perception of Professional Development Opportunities

The first research question in this study was aimed at examining teachers' perceptions of professional development opportunities that exist in the Turkish elementary schools. It particularly focused on availability and usefulness of current in-service activities, teachers' perceptions of their relationships with others in the school environment, and how they engaged with each other for the purpose of professional growth. Twenty-four questions in section II, (nine in part-1, eleven in part-2, and four in part-3), were designed to address those issues mentioned above.

Availability and Usefulness of In-service Activities

The questions in section II part-1 of the survey questionnaire were designed to find out teachers' perceptions of availability of in-service activities, whether they have participated in any of those activities, and whether they found them useful.

As Table 3 displays, 69 percent of teachers participated in in-service activities organized by the Ministry of Education (MOE hereafter). A majority of those teachers participated in in-service activities by the MOE only once (36 %) or twice (38 %).

Table 3 also shows that 56 percent of teachers participated in in-service activities organized by the City Board of Education (BOE hereafter). Almost half of those teachers (47 %) participated in an activity only once, and 38 percent of them participated only twice. Most of the teachers participated in this study have had only 2 or 3 workshops from either source and they felt that there were not enough in-service activities.

The number of respondents who had never participated in any in-service activities offered by either MOE or BOE was 61 (20 %). Most of these participants (87 %) had worked in rural schools, and about one-third of these 61 respondents (28 %) had never worked in urban schools. Thus, it can be said that the reason why these respondents had never participated in any in-service training activities might be because in-service training activities are not widely available in rural areas. Hence the persons most likely to need support and service may not be getting it.

Similarly, the percentages of participants who had attended workshops offered by both MOE and BOE show that while 122 respondents (45 %) from urban schools attended in-service training activities offered by both sources, only 11 respondents (26 %) from rural schools had done so.

Table 3: Distribution of Responses to Questions on Attendance to In-service Activities Organized by the Ministry of Education and by the City Board of Education

Questions on Participation to In-service Activities		Frequency	Percent
Have you ever participated in any in-service training activities organized by the Ministry of Education (workshop, course etc.)?	Yes	213	69.2
	No	95	30.8
		N = 308	100.0
If the answer is "Yes", how many times have you participated?	1	69	35.9
	2	74	38.5
	3	28	14.6
	4	13	6.8
	5 +	8	4.2
		N = 192	100.0
Have you ever participated in any in-service training activities organized by the City Board of Education(workshop, course etc.)?	Yes	166	56.5
	No	128	43.5
		N = 294	100.0
If the answer is "Yes", how many times have you participated?	1	68	47.2
	2	55	38.2
	3	15	1.4
	4 +	6	4.2
		N = 144	100.0
Number of respondents who attended no workshops offered by either MOE or BOE	N = 313	61	19.5
Urban School Teachers	N = 270	44	16.3
Rural School Teachers	N = 43	17	39.5
Experience in Rural Schools	N = 61	53	86.9
Experience Only in Rural Schools	N = 61	17	27.8
Number of respondents who attended workshops offered by both MOE and BOE	N = 313	133	42.5
Urban School Teachers	N = 270	122	45.2
Rural School Teachers	N = 43	11	25.6
Experience Only in Rural Schools	N = 133	5	3.7

In addition, of the 122 respondents who participated in workshops offered by both MOE and BOE, only 5 respondents had experience "only in rural schools". These numbers might also indicate that rural school teachers are less fortunate in having access to in-service training activities.

Most of the teachers (81 %) somewhat to strongly agreed with the statement that in-service activities which they had attended were useful in improving their teaching skills, knowledge, and in solving difficulties they had in the classroom (see Table 4). Teachers also somewhat to strongly agreed (60 %) that new ideas presented during in-service activities were discussed afterwards by teachers in their schools. However, many teachers also believe (54 %) that there are not enough in-service activities/opportunities available for them. Most teachers (64 %) further added that teachers cannot attend as many workshops, seminars, or courses as they would like because they

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have to apply for and be selected by the organizers who happen to be administrators at MOE or BOE. As these responses indicate, although teachers find in-service activities useful, they are not widely available to all teachers.

Table 4: Distribution of Responses to Survey Questions on Availability and Usefulness of In-service Activities

Statements About Availability and Usefulness of In-service Activities	Frequencies and Percentages						
		DK*	SD*	D*	SWA*	A*	SA*
1- In-service training activities which I have attended were very useful in improving my teaching skills/ knowledge, and in solving the	N=212	5	8	27	91	54	27
difficulties that I had in the classroom.	%	2.4	3.8	12.7	42.9	25.5	12.7
2- New ideas presented at in-service activities are discussed	N=215	11	20	54	66	50	14
afterwards by teachers in my school.	%	5.1	9.3	25.1	30.7	23.3	6.5
3- There are enough in-service activities/ opportunities available	N=295	32	58	102	60	38	5
for teachers in our district.	%	10.8	19.7	34.6	20.3	12.9	1.7
4- Teachers in my district cannot attend any workshops, seminars or courses (offered either by the City Board of Education or	N=292	42	11	53	39	99	48
Ministry of Education) as they would like to because they have to apply for and be selected by the organizers.	%	14.4	3.8	18.2	13.4	33.9	16.4
5- In-service activities, such as workshops and seminars on various instructional subjects, help teachers to get together and	N=297	7	10	24	51	139	66
share their experiences.	%	2.4	3.4	8.1	17.2	46.8	22.2
6- Teachers can get opportunities to improve their teaching knowledge and skills	N=293	4	5	12	48	141	83
by participating in in-service activities.	%	1.4	1.7	4.1	16.4	48.1	28.3
7- In-service activities are not necessary;	N=298	12	79	115	51	26	15
teaching experience helps teachers more.	%	4.0	26.5	38.6	17.1	8.7	5.0

*Legend: DK: Don't Know SD: Strongly Disagree D: Disagree
SWA: Somewhat Agree A: Agree SA: Strongly Agree

As indicated in Table 4, most of the teachers believe that participating in in-service activities helps teachers to get together and share their experiences (86.2 %), and provides them with opportunities to improve their teaching knowledge and skills (93 %). They also believe that participating in in-service activities would be more helpful in their teaching than teaching experience itself (65 %). However, as mentioned earlier, most teachers have had only 2 or 3 workshops from any source.

When all the demographic variables were cross-tabulated against the participants' responses to the two questions on participation in in-service activities, it was found that urban and rural school teachers differ significantly in their responses. While only half of the rural school teachers had ever participated in in-service training activities organized by the MOE, and only 35 % of them participated in activities organized by the BOE, most of the urban school teachers (72 %, and 60 % respectively) had participated in these programs. The reason why rural school teachers had

participated in in-service training activities less than urban school teachers might be because, as mentioned earlier, these in-service training activities are not widely available in rural areas.

There is also a significant difference between urban and rural school teachers in terms of how many times they participated in in-service training activities by MOE. Urban school teachers participated in these programs many more times than rural school teachers did. Thus, not only did more urban school teachers than rural school teachers attend in-service training activities, but they attended more activities as well.

Teachers Perceptions of Their Relationships With Others in the School Environment

Eleven items in section II part-2 of the survey questionnaire consisted of statements about teachers' professional relationships with other teachers, administrators, and supervisors. These statements addressed teachers' beliefs about the effectiveness of supervisory activities that administrators and supervisors offer, and how they perceive their professional relationships with other teachers.

Distribution of responses to the above issues is presented in Table 5. According to the responses, most of the participants (68 %) think that administrators are available and many of them (52 %) believe that supervisors are available in giving assistance and instructional help when teachers have problems and concerns. However, most of the participants (58 %) also think that the evaluation reports prepared by the administrators and supervisors are not very encouraging in enabling teachers to grow professionally, and many of them (56 %) believe that inspection by supervisors does not help to improve the teaching process in the schools. In other words, most teachers think supervisors are available but their availability or how they perform does not contribute to teachers' professional development.

The responses to the item about the evaluation of teachers by supervisors indicates that teachers are divided on this issue. While 53 percent of teachers said that they can ask supervisors questions and concerns they have about their teaching, 44 percent of them said they couldn't.

Another finding about professional relationships in the school is that only 21 percent of the respondents said that beginning teachers in their schools have a teacher assigned to help them with their teaching. This indicates that this type of organized professional help is not available to many teachers. Interestingly, about one-fifth of the participants (18 %) selected the "Don't Know" option. This might mean either they did not know whether such an organized system existed in their schools or they were not familiar with this method at all.

On the issue of whether teachers who talk about their weaknesses in teaching and problems they face in the classroom are seen as inadequate, most of the teachers (55 %) think that they are not. In addition, only a few (13 %) respondents said that if other teachers ask them for advice, it implies that they are more competent. This can be interpreted as teachers being open to discuss their professional weaknesses and problems and ready to ask other teachers for advice, or to give help to their colleagues.

Table 5: **Distribution of Responses to Survey Questions on Professional Relationships Among Teachers, Between Teachers and School Administrators, and Between Teachers and Supervisors**

Statements About Professional Relationships	Frequencies and Percentages						
		DK*	SD*	D*	SWA*	A*	SA*
1- Administrators in my school, are available in giving assistance when teachers have instructional problems/concerns.	N=309	7	32	59	98	79	34
	%	2.3	10.4	19.1	31.7	25.6	11.0
2- Supervisors are available in giving teachers instructional help when teachers have problems/concerns.	N=310	2	51	96	115	41	5
	%	.6	16.5	31.0	37.1	13.2	1.6
3- Administrators' and supervisors' evaluation reports are very helpful/encouraging in enabling teachers to grow professionally.	N=309	3	69	109	67	48	13
	%	1.0	22.3	35.3	21.7	15.5	4.2
4- I believe that inspection by supervisors helps to improve the teaching process in the schools.	N=308	5	63	111	82	39	8
	%	1.6	20.5	36.0	26.6	12.7	2.6
5- Since supervisors evaluate teachers, teachers cannot ask them the questions/ concerns they have about their teaching.	N=305	8	49	113	76	45	14
	%	2.6	16.1	37.0	24.9	14.8	4.6
6- In my school, beginning teachers have a teacher assigned to help them with their teaching.	N=302	56	84	97	23	28	14
	%	18.5	27.8	32.1	7.6	9.3	4.6
7- When teachers talk about their weaknesses in teaching and problems they face in the classroom, they are viewed as inadequate.	N=302	6	61	104	44	67	20
	%	2.0	20.2	34.4	14.6	22.2	6.6
8- In my school, there is scheduled joint planning time for teachers who teach the same grade.	N=306	19	31	87	47	100	22
	%	6.2	10.1	28.4	15.4	32.7	7.2
9- In my school, there is a time slot scheduled for teachers to get together (in pairs, small groups, or as a whole) to share their problems, experiences, difficulties, concerns, and possible solutions.	N=301	17	48	111	59	50	16
	%	5.6	16.0	36.9	19.6	16.6	5.3
10-In my school, during the faculty meetings teachers share their instructional problems, solutions to those problems and new ideas with other teachers	N=306	8	29	49	75	107	38
	%	2.6	9.5	16.0	24.5	35.0	12.4
11-If other teachers ask me for advice, it implies that I am more competent than they are.	N=306	9	107	149	19	18	4
	%	2.9	35.0	48.7	6.2	5.9	1.3

*Legend: DK: Don't Know SD: Strongly Disagree D: Disagree
SWA: Somewhat Agree A: Agree SA: Strongly Agree

Another item in the questionnaire asked whether there was a scheduled joint planning time for teachers who teach the same grade. Most participants (55 %) said that they had such scheduled joint planning time. On the other hand, many teachers (53 %) stated that there was no time slot scheduled for all teachers to get together (in pairs, small groups, or altogether) to share their problems, experiences, difficulties, concerns, and possible solutions. Even though many teachers claim that they don't have a scheduled time slot in their schools for sharing their experiences, problems or ideas, most of them (72 %) stated that they share these during faculty meetings.

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Teachers Engagement with Each Other

Statements in section II part-3 of the survey questionnaire were designed to find out teachers' professional relationships such as sharing instructional experiences, problems, educational materials etc., with other teachers.

Table 6 shows that teachers tend to talk to each other on a variety of subjects when they get together during the breaks: curriculum and instruction (70 %), complaints about student behavior (62 %), complaints about work conditions (53 %), and social plan and activities (34 %). On the other hand, 6 percent of the respondents said that they had no time to talk.

Table 6: Distribution of Responses to Survey Questions on Professional Relationships Among Teachers

Questions on Professional Relationships	Frequency	Percent
When we teachers get together during the breaks, we talk about:		
a- Social plans and activities	105	34.2
b- Complaints about work conditions	164	53.4
c- Complaints about student behavior	190	61.9
d- Curriculum and instruction	216	70.4
e- We have no time to talk	19	6.2
How often do you have structured meetings with your colleagues at your school for professional purposes (such as discussing instructional problems, curriculum development or preparing plans etc.) ?		
a- Once a week or more	15	4.9
b- Twice in a month	17	5.5
c- Once a month	66	21.5
d- Once or twice a semester	188	61.2
How often do teachers in your school invite each other to each other's classrooms to make observations?		
a- Frequently	14	4.5
b- Sometimes	81	26.1
c- Rarely	70	22.6
d- Never	144	46.5
When I have an instructional concern/question or problem, I can ask help from:		
a- The principal	118	38.1
b- The assistant principal	74	23.9
c- A teacher whom I know	92	29.8
d- A teacher who teaches the same grade as I do	198	63.9
e- Any teacher	59	19.1

In addition to the given options mentioned above, some teachers reported other things they talk about during the breaks in the "other" option in the survey questionnaire. Twenty-eight teachers, for example, indicated that they also talk about living conditions, inflation, and some other daily matters, and two teachers said that they talk about parent-teacher-school relationships.

When asked how often they have structured meetings with their colleagues at their schools for professional purposes such as discussing instructional problems, curriculum development or preparing plans etc., a majority of the respondents (61 %) said they get together once or twice a semester. People who said 'once a month' accounted for 22 percent, 'twice a month' 6 percent, and 'once a week or more' accounted for only 5 percent. In addition, 19 teachers (6 %) added that they never get together, and two teachers (.7 %) said that they get together only at the beginning of the school year. These responses indicate that teachers do not have many opportunities to meet with other teachers for professional purposes.

Responses to the question of how often teachers invite other teachers to each other's classroom for the purpose of observations indicate that only a very small number of teachers make use of observations to improve each other's teaching. A considerably high number of teachers (46 %) said that they 'never' invite other teachers to their classroom nor do they visit other classrooms for observations. More than twenty two percent of the respondents said that they 'rarely' invite each other to each other's classrooms, and 26 percent said that they 'sometimes' do. These responses draw a picture of school culture where there are walls between teachers which prevent them from interacting with each other professionally.

Another question asked who teachers can ask for help when they have instructional concerns. As response to this question, the respondents had five choices of which they could chose as many as they would like. Most of the teachers (64 %) said that they could ask help from a teacher who teaches the same grade as they do. While 19 percent of the participants said they could ask help from any teacher, many others (38 %) said that they would ask the principal, 24 percent said they could also ask the assistant principal, and 30 percent responded that they could ask a teacher they know. In addition to these, 2 teachers (.6 %) added that they could ask for help from supervisors, and 1 teacher remarked that there is nobody they could ask for help.

Teachers' Beliefs About Teacher Development

Teachers' Beliefs About Teacher Development Opportunities

The second research question was aimed at finding out whether teachers believe that various teacher development opportunities help them to improve their instructional practices in the classroom. To answer this issue, the 24 questionnaire items in section III included statements about the extent to which teachers believe they need professional help to improve their teaching, and whether they think that assigning mentor teachers to assist beginning teachers, observing and coaching each other in the classroom, and sharing experiences, difficulties, and concerns are practical in their school environment. Moreover, these statements addressed the current situation in the schools in terms of teachers' professional relationships with others, more specifically, professional interactions between experienced and new teachers. In addition, teachers' beliefs about the accessibility of professional publications were explored in this section. The distribution

of answers for this section is presented in Table 7.

Responses to the first question in section III of the survey questionnaire indicated that the participants overwhelmingly (93 %) believe that teachers do need opportunities to improve their teaching skills and knowledge. Almost 80 percent of the respondents also think that they do not receive the professional help they need. Although many of the teachers (72 %) believe that their teacher training program or their experience in teaching has given them all the necessary skills to be an effective teacher, and most teachers (90 %) feel good about their teaching style and strategies and think that they are successful, almost one half of the respondents (45 %) also said that sometimes it was hard to know how they were doing in their teaching.

As displayed in Table 7, an overwhelmingly high percentage of the participants (94 %) believe that teachers should be given opportunities to share their ideas with other teachers, and most of them (94 %) also think that interaction among teachers and exploration of ideas are useful for teachers' professional and personal development. Most teachers (91 %) also think that assigning beginning teachers mentor teachers would help them to adjust successfully to their new environment.

Most of the teachers also (91 %) believe that working with another colleague, observing each other in classroom teaching, and giving each other constructive feedback would help both teachers to improve their teaching skills. In addition, 78 percent of the participants stated that demonstration lessons by supervisors and/or administrators help teachers to improve their teaching.

In terms of sharing instructional materials, ideas, problems and concerns, most of the participants (83 %) reported that teachers in their schools share materials, ideas and problems, and other teaching related things with their colleagues, and most teachers (87 %) also said they personally do so. A large number of teachers (95 %) also believe that when teachers have problems, they should be able to discuss them with any teacher who might be able to help, and most of the participants (94 %) also said they give help and support to other teachers when they have problems in their teaching. However, a lower percentage of teachers (78 %) reported that they actually receive informal evaluations of their teaching performance from other teachers.

In terms of the use of professional publications, what teachers reported shows that many teachers do not have access to professional publications in Turkey. While almost all teachers (95 %) believe that use of professional publications helps teachers learn about new developments in the field of education, and may help them to learn about new techniques or solutions to some problems that they face, only 39 percent of them reported that they have access to professional publications.

Table 7: Distribution of Responses to Survey Questions on Teachers' Beliefs and Feelings About Their Professional Dev., and The Ways They Could Help Each Other to Improve Their Teaching Skills

Statements About Teachers' Beliefs and Feelings About Their Professional Development	Frequencies and Percentages						
		DK*	SD*	D*	SWA*	A*	SA*
1- Teachers need opportunities to improve their teaching knowledge and skills.	N=311	-	13	10	10	170	108
	%	-	4.2	3.2	3.2	54.7	34.7
2- Teachers receive the professional help they need.	N=308	5	79	167	34	16	7
	%	1.6	25.6	54.2	11.0	5.2	2.3
3- My teacher training program and/or experience has given me all the necessary skills to be an effective teacher.	N=311	-	35	53	105	81	37
	%	-	11.3	17.0	33.8	26.0	11.9
4- Sometimes, it is hard to know how I am doing in my teaching.	N=308	3	29	110	92	68	6
	%	1.0	9.4	35.7	29.9	22.1	1.9
5- I feel good about my teaching style and strategies; I think they are successful.	N=303	6	3	23	65	155	51
	%	2.0	1.0	7.6	21.5	51.2	16.8
6- Teachers should be given opportunities to share their ideas with other teachers.	N=310	-	7	10	10	159	124
	%	-	2.3	3.2	3.2	51.3	40.0
7- Interaction among teachers and exploration of ideas are useful for teachers' professional and personal development.	N=311	2	5	12	21	158	113
	%	.6	1.6	3.9	6.8	50.8	36.3
8- Demonstration lessons by supervisors and/or administrators help teachers to improve their teaching skills.	N=308	5	21	43	76	108	55
	%	1.6	6.8	14.0	24.7	35.1	17.9
9- Assigning beginning teachers a mentor teacher helps them to adjust successfully to their new environment.	N=310	1	8	18	33	154	96
	%	.3	2.6	5.8	10.6	49.7	31.0
10- Working with another colleague, observing each other in classroom teaching, and giving each other constructive feedback, helps both teachers to improve their teaching skills.	N=308	4	7	16	41	149	91
	%	1.3	2.3	5.2	13.3	48.4	29.5
11- Teachers in our school share their ideas, methods and instructional materials with other teachers.	N=305	9	12	32	82	125	45
	%	3.0	3.9	10.5	26.9	41.0	14.8
12- I share information, materials, problems/concerns, and ideas with the other teachers who teach the same grade level as I do.	N=301	3	6	31	63	96	102
	%	1.0	2.0	10.3	20.9	31.9	33.9
13- I give help and support to other teachers when they have problms in their teaching	N=305	4	4	11	57	128	101
	%	1.3	1.3	3.6	18.7	42.0	33.1
14- I receive informal evaluations of my teaching performance from other teachers	N=306	7	3	56	94	96	50
	%	2.3	1.0	18.3	30.7	31.4	16.3
15- I believe that when teachers have problems, they should be able to discuss them with any teacher who might be able to help.	N=309	1	2	12	7	136	151
	%	.3	.6	3.9	2.3	44.0	48.9
16- Use of professional publications helps teachers to know the developments in the field of education, and may help them to learn of new techniques or solutions to some problems that they face.	N=305	2	1	11	37	134	120
	%	.7	.3	3.6	12.1	43.9	39.3
17- Teachers in my school have access to professional publications.	N=299	19	72	92	60	38	18
	%	6.4	24.1	30.8	20.1	12.7	6.0

*Legend: DK: Don't Know SD: Strongly Disagree D: Disagree
SWA: Somewhat Agree A: Agree SA: Strongly Agree

Teachers' Beliefs About Experienced Teachers' Role in Teaching/Learning

Almost one half of the respondents agreed with the statement that experienced teachers do not help new teachers. On the issue of why they do not help new teachers, most of the participants (58 %) think that because new teachers are not asking for help (see Table 8), and many of them (47

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percent) also believe that helping new teachers might be interpreted as interference. In addition to these reasons mentioned above, three teachers offered "being unhappy on the job because of an unsatisfactory salary" as another reason why experienced teachers do not help new teachers.

On the other hand, as a response to why they believe that experienced teachers do not help new teachers, many of the participants seem to disagree or strongly disagree with the statements, such as "it is not their responsibility to help new teachers' (56 %), "new teachers should experience the same difficulties that they have had" (68 %), and "giving them teaching hints could make them more successful than they are" (75 %) (see Table 8). This finding could be an indication that not many teachers believe that new teachers should not be helped, instead they think that the request should come from the other side. In other words, there is a big communication gap between the new teachers, the ones who need help, and the experienced teachers, the ones who could offer help in terms of how to utilize their resources.

Table 8: Distribution of Responses to Survey Questions on Experienced Teachers Role

Experienced teachers do not help new teachers because they believe that:	Frequencies and Percentages						
		DK*	SD*	D*	SWA*	A*	SA*
a- It is not their responsibility to help new teachers	N=246	22	52	87	31	42	12
	%	8.9	21.1	35.4	12.6	17.1	4.9
b- New teachers are not asking for help	N=250	22	20	62	64	62	20
	%	8.8	8.0	24.8	25.6	24.8	8.0
c- New teachers should experience the same difficulties that they have had	N=225	19	58	95	29	20	4
	%	8.4	25.8	42.2	12.9	8.9	1.8
d- Giving them teaching hints could make them more successful than they are	N=234	13	80	95	23	16	7
	%	5.6	34.2	40.6	9.8	6.8	3.0
e- Helping new teachers might be interpreted as interference	N=246	14	37	79	53	47	16
	%	5.7	15.0	32.1	21.5	19.1	6.5

*Legend: DK: Don't Know SD: Strongly Disagree D: Disagree
SWA: Somewhat Agree A: Agree SA: Strongly Agree

Although one half of the respondents believe that experienced teachers do not help new teachers, the participants overwhelmingly feel that experienced teachers should help new teachers (88 %). As presented in Table 9, most of the respondents think that experienced teachers should help new teachers for a variety of reasons: to make a contribution to the teaching profession (96 %), to form new friendships (94 %), to become aware of their own potential (89 %), to see their own strengths and weaknesses (86 %), to learn new ideas and methods from new teachers (86 %), and finally to get the satisfaction of helping another individual (86 %). In addition to these, three teachers (.9 %) added that it would help to develop solidarity and trust among teachers if experienced teachers help new teachers.

Table 9: Distribution of Responses to Questions on Experienced Teachers Helping New Teachers

Experienced teachers should help new teachers because they can:		Frequencies and Percentages					
		DK*	SD*	D*	SWA*	A*	SA*
a- Learn new ideas and methods from new teachers	N=257	8	7	20	54	115	53
	%	3.1	2.7	7.8	21.0	44.7	20.6
b- Become aware of their own potential	N=248	3	4	21	51	126	43
	%	1.2	1.6	8.5	20.6	50.8	17.3
c- Get the satisfaction of helping another individual	N=242	4	5	23	49	108	52
	%	1.7	2.1	9.5	20.2	44.6	21.5
d- Form new friendships	N=247	2	3	10	35	124	73
	%	.8	1.2	4.0	14.2	50.2	29.6
e- See their own strengths and weaknesses	N=237	-	6	26	38	118	49
	%	-	2.5	11.0	16.0	49.8	20.7
f- Make a contribution to the profession	N=267	2	1	8	31	138	87
	%	.7	.4	3.0	11.6	51.7	32.6
g- Experienced teachers should not help new teachers	N=206	9	94	80	5	8	10
	%	4.4	45.6	38.8	2.4	3.9	4.9

*Legend: DK: Don't Know SD: Strongly Disagree D: Disagree
SWA: Somewhat Agree A: Agree SA: Strongly Agree

Table 10: Distribution of Responses to Survey Questions on the Areas Experienced Teachers Can Help New Teachers

Experienced teachers can help new teachers in areas such as:		Frequencies and Percentages					
		DK*	SD*	D*	SWA*	A*	SA*
a- Dealing with students' personal problems	N=252	2	7	24	41	129	49
	%	.8	2.8	9.5	16.3	51.2	19.4
b- Classroom discipline	N=248	2	11	34	48	119	34
	%	.8	4.4	13.7	19.4	48.0	13.7
c- Motivating students	N=252	-	3	20	48	138	43
	%	-	1.2	7.9	19.0	54.8	17.1
d- Evaluating students	N=247	-	4	18	46	145	34
	%	-	1.6	7.3	18.6	58.7	13.8
e- Planning classwork	N=250	1	1	20	40	145	43
	%	.4	.4	8.0	16.0	58.0	17.2
f- Using different teaching styles	N=265	1	1	4	43	147	69
	%	.4	.4	1.5	16.2	55.5	26.0
g- Finding instructional materials	N=247	4	1	10	36	143	53
	%	1.6	.4	4.0	14.6	57.9	21.5
h- Experienced teachers should not help new teachers	N=212	8	102	75	4	13	10
	%	3.8	48.1	35.4	1.9	6.1	4.7

*Legend: DK: Don't Know SD: Strongly Disagree D: Disagree
SWA: Somewhat Agree A: Agree SA: Strongly Agree

Teachers believe that experienced teachers can help new teachers in a variety of areas. Table

10 presents the answers given by the participants in regard to the areas experienced teachers can help new teachers. Many teachers think that experienced teachers can help new teachers in areas such as: using different teaching styles (98 %), finding instructional materials (94 %), planning classwork (91 %), evaluating students (91 %), motivating students (91 %), dealing with students' personal problems (87 %), and classroom discipline (81 %). In addition, 6 teachers (2 %) noted that experienced teachers can also help new teachers in parent-teacher relationships and in organizing social activities.

Teachers' Suggestions for Their Personal and Professional Development

The distribution of responses to the given suggestions that would be useful for teachers' personal and professional development is presented in Table 11.

The percentages indicate that sharing experiences, difficulties, concerns and problems is the most important factor which teachers think would be the most useful for teachers' personal and professional development (97 %). This is followed by sharing instructional materials (97 %), in-service courses (92 %), observing other teachers in the classroom (86 %), assigning mentor teachers to assist beginning teachers (82 %), and coaching each other in the classroom (60 %). As found in the first section of the questionnaire, where participants thought that supervisors were available but their availability did not contribute to their professional development, in terms of personal and professional development supervisory activities was found the least useful activity (52 %) by the teachers.

Table 11: Distribution of Responses to the Given Suggestions That Would be Useful in the School Setting

Some of the following suggestions for teachers' personal and professional development may be derived from a review of literature in the field. To what extent these suggestions/ activities do you think would be useful in the school setting?	Frequencies and Percentages						
		DK*	SD*	D*	SWA*	A*	SA*
a- Assigning mentor teachers to assist beginning teachers	N=247	13	10	20	45	112	47
	%	5.3	4.0	8.1	18.2	45.3	19.0
b- Coaching each other in the classroom	N=238	13	13	68	68	60	16
	%	5.5	5.5	28.6	28.6	25.2	6.7
c- Sharing instructional materials	N=238	1	-	7	39	148	43
	%	.4	-	2.9	16.4	62.2	18.1
d- Observing other teachers in the classroom	N=240	4	3	26	66	99	42
	%	1.7	1.3	10.8	27.5	41.3	17.5
e- Sharing experiences, difficulties, concerns, and problems	N=271	-	-	8	21	161	81
	%	-	-	3.0	7.7	59.4	29.9
f- In-service courses	N=245	4	5	10	44	113	69
	%	1.6	2.0	4.1	18.0	46.1	28.2
g- Supervisory activities	N=230	7	33	70	64	42	14
	%	3.0	14.3	30.4	27.8	18.3	6.1

*Legend: DK: Don't Know SD: Strongly Disagree D: Disagree
SWA: Somewhat Agree A: Agree SA: Strongly Agree

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Summary of Findings

Responses to the study questionnaire by a sample of 313 public school teachers, which is a close representation of the population by gender and school type, indicate that most teachers have participated in in-service training activities only once or twice during their career. There was a strong relationship between the school type the participants worked in and their participation in in-service workshops or courses. Rural school teachers have been less fortunate in having access to in-service training activities than urban school teachers (see Table 12).

The survey respondents overwhelmingly agreed that teachers need opportunities to improve their teaching skills and knowledge, but they reported that they do not receive the professional help they need. They also agreed that participating in in-service activities helps teachers to get together and share their experiences and provides them opportunities to improve their teaching knowledge and skills. However, they noted that they cannot participate in these activities as many times as they would like to because the in-service activities are not widely available in all areas and teachers have to apply for and be selected in order to be able to attend them. The respondents stated that more in-service training activities, seminars, professional meetings and conferences should be organized and those activities should be made available to all teachers.

In terms of their relationships with others in the school environment, most of the participants think that administrators and supervisors are available in giving assistance and instructional help. However, they also think that the evaluation reports prepared by the administrators and supervisors are not very encouraging in enabling teachers to grow professionally and that inspection done by the supervisors does not help to improve the teaching process in the schools.

Almost all of the respondents think that interaction among teachers and exploration of ideas, assigning mentor teachers to beginning teachers, working with another colleague, observing each other in classroom teaching, and giving each other constructive feedback are useful for teachers' professional and personal development. However, a lower percentage of them reported that they actually receive informal evaluations of their teaching performance from other teachers.

Although the respondents overwhelmingly feel that experienced teachers should help new teachers, almost one half of the respondents believe that experienced teachers do not help new teachers. Most of the participants think that experienced teachers do not help new teachers because new teachers are not asking for help, and many of them also believe that helping new teachers might be interpreted as interference.

Some of the ways the respondents suggested experienced teachers can help beginning teachers were; giving them moral support and creating an environment in which teachers can be open and sincere about their problems and fears, inviting beginning teachers to their classrooms and giving sample lessons, and helping them to get to know their environment.

The respondents overwhelmingly believe that when teachers have problems, they should be able to discuss them with any teacher. They also said that they give help and support to other

teachers when they have problems in their teaching. Most of the respondents think that teachers who talk about their weaknesses in teaching and problems they face are not seen as inadequate. They seem to be open to discuss their weaknesses and problems and ready to ask other teachers for advice, or give help to their colleagues.

Table 12: Summary of Significant Differences in Participants' Responses to the Survey Questions by Demographic Characteristics

By School Type	By Gender	By Educational Background	By Number of Years Teaching in the Same School
Rural school teachers: more likely to be new teachers most likely to have a positive perception of supervisors less fortunate in having access to in-service training activities more likely to see the problems/ concerns as only beginning teachers' problems more likely to believe that assigning mentor teachers to assist beginning teachers, and coaching each other would be useful in the school setting **Urban school teachers:** More likely to have 16-25 years of experience More likely to participate in in-service training activities	**Female teachers:** more likely to share information, instructional materials, teaching concerns, and ideas with other teachers more likely to participate in more in-service training activities more likely to accept that feeling nervous when supervised is every teacher's problem **Male teachers:** more likely to believe that coaching each other would be useful in the school setting	**Junior college and below education:** more likely to be more experienced more likely to participate in more in-service training activities **College and above education:** more likely to be less experienced more likely to be younger more likely to believe that inspection by supervisors helps to improve the teaching process more likely to believe that experienced teachers do not help new teachers more likely to believe that coaching each other would be useful in the school setting	**Longer years at the same school:** more likely to believe that their teacher training program and/or experience has given them all the necessary skills to be effective teachers more likely to refrain asking question to a teacher whom they know

Some of the ways the respondents suggested a pair of teachers can improve each other's teaching were; discussing professional matters and exchanging ideas, preparing lesson plans together, observing each other's teaching, and teaching each other's class.

A majority of the respondents said that they get together once or twice a semester with their colleagues at their schools for professional purposes such as discussing instructional problems, curriculum development, or preparing plans, etc. Responses to the question of how often teachers invite other teachers to each other's classroom for the purpose of observations indicate that almost one half of the participants never make use of observations to improve each other's teaching. When they have an instructional concern or problem, most of the respondents said that they prefer

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asking help from a teacher who teaches the same grade as they do.

In terms of using professional publications, most of the teachers reported that they do not have access to professional publications although almost all of them believe that they would help them learn about new developments in education and might also help them to learn about new techniques or solutions to some problems they face in teaching.

Conclusions and Implications

Before suggesting implications for practice and research, findings concerning availability and usefulness of in-service activities, teachers' professional relationships with administrators and supervisors, teachers' engagement with other teachers for the purpose of each other's professional growth, and teachers' beliefs about various teacher development opportunities.

Availability and Usefulness of In-service Activities

One of the important findings of this study was that most teachers had participated in only two or three workshops offered by the MOE or BOE, and although most teachers found in-service activities useful, they reported that the in-service training activities are not widely available to all teachers.

The respondents showed significant differences in their perceptions of availability of in-service activities by the school type they work in. The survey results indicate that the majority of teachers who were able to participate in in-service training workshops were urban school teachers. Not only did fewer rural school teachers attended in-service training activities, but they also attended those activities less frequently. These findings clearly show that rural school teachers have been less fortunate in having access to in-service training activities since these activities are not widely available in rural areas.

Teachers with 'junior college and below' education are more likely to have attended in-service training activities. This finding could be explained by the fact that most of the teachers with 'junior college and below' education are experienced teachers, and therefore, they might have had more chances to attend these activities.

Most teachers agreed that in-service activities which they have attended were useful in improving their teaching skills, knowledge, and in solving difficulties they had in their classrooms. Most teachers also believe that participating in in-service training activities would provide teachers with the opportunities to share their experiences and problems with others and find common solutions to common problems and concerns.

Teachers' Professional Relationships With Administrators and Supervisors in the School Environment

A large majority of teachers believe that administrators and supervisors are available in giving assistance and instructional support when teachers have problems and concerns. However, they

also think that evaluation reports prepared by the administrators and supervisors are not very encouraging in enabling them to grow professionally. In addition, when asked to rate the importance of different ways for teachers' personal and professional development among seven options, supervisory activities were found the least useful activity by the participants.

The rural and urban school teachers differed in their responses on this issue. More rural school teachers than urban school teachers agreed that supervisors are available in giving assistance when teachers have problems. They also seem to believe in the value of supervisory activities in the school setting more than urban school teachers do. The reason for this difference could be that rural school teachers are mostly new teachers and that they are in more need for professional help, and also supervisors might be spending relatively more time with teachers in the rural schools since there are fewer teachers in those areas.

Teachers Engagement With Each Other for the Purpose of Each Other's Professional Growth

Most of the teachers think that teachers who talk about their weaknesses in teaching and problems they face in the classroom are not seen as inadequate, and a majority of them also believe that being asked for advice does not make them more competent than the others. This shows that teachers are open to discuss their professional problems and concerns, and offer each other help when it is needed. However, most teachers also reported that there was not a structured time slot in their school for this purpose. It looks like most teachers do not have organized meetings with their colleagues for professional purposes, and the only time period teachers get together to talk is during the breaks between classes.

Most teachers prefer to ask their instruction related questions to a teacher who teaches the same grade as they do, and many of them reported that teachers who teach the same grade level in their schools have scheduled joint planning time. Most of the teachers with 'college and above' education, however, stated that they could ask help from teachers with whom they have informal relationships. This finding could be interpreted as teachers with 'college and above' education being more open to people with whom they have personal relationships with rather than being able to ask questions to any teacher in school. The survey findings reveal that teachers' experience is related to their decisions about whom they could ask for help when they have an instructional question or problem. It was interesting to find out that the longer they stayed in the same school, the less they said they would ask a question to a teacher whom they know. This might be because the longer teachers stay in the same school the stronger the competition among them might grow. It is also possible, the longer they stay in the same school, the fewer questions they might have.

The findings also show that teachers do not invite each other to each other's classrooms for observations. Even though many teachers reported that they receive informal evaluations of their teaching performance from other teachers, they also said that sometimes it was hard for them to know how they were doing in their teaching.

Most of the teachers reported that teachers in their schools share materials, ideas and

problems, and other teaching related things with their colleagues, and most also said that they personally do so.

About half of the participants believe that experienced teachers do not help new teachers, and most of them think that it is because new teachers are not asking for help. However, rural school teachers are less likely to think that this is the reason. Many of them believe that experienced teachers do not help new teachers because they believe that giving new teachers teaching hints could make them more successful than they are. Because of this belief beginning teachers in rural schools may feel themselves lonely and uncomfortable asking experienced teachers for help even if they are able to find one. On the other hand, the participants overwhelmingly believe that experienced teachers should help new teachers. Most participants reported that experienced teachers could help new teachers in a variety of areas and that both teachers, experienced and new, could benefit from this process.

The respondents' educational background is related to whether they think experienced teachers help new teachers. School culture which can be defined as a sum of relationships among different members in the school community, can be clearly seen in the perceptions of two groups of teachers with different educational backgrounds. More teachers with 'college and above' education than teachers with 'junior college and below' seem to believe that experienced teachers do not help new teachers. They also think that the reason why they do not want to help new teachers is because experienced teachers believe that giving new teachers teaching hints could make them more successful than they are.

More women participants than men believe that experienced teachers do not help new teachers because they think that helping new teachers might be interpreted as interference. Although many of the participants seem to be willing to share ideas, information, instructional materials, they also have some reservations. Therefore, an organized way of teachers helping teachers might eliminate their doubts and contribute to the teaching-learning process.

Teachers' Beliefs About Various Teacher Development Opportunities

An overwhelmingly large portion of the respondents believe that teachers need opportunities to improve their teaching skills and knowledge. However, they also believe that teachers do not receive the professional help they need.

Most teachers said that interaction among teachers and exploration of ideas, sharing experiences, difficulties, concerns and problems, sharing instructional materials are useful for teachers' professional and personal development, and they also believe that teachers should be given opportunities to share their ideas with others. Moreover, most teachers think that working with another colleague, observing and coaching each other in classroom teaching, and giving each other constructive feedback would help both teachers to improve their teaching skills. The respondents also believe that assigning beginning teachers, mentor teachers would help them to adjust successfully to their new environment and would be useful for their personal and

professional development.

The rural school teachers significantly differed from urban school teachers in their responses to statements about assigning mentor teachers, and coaching each other in the classroom. More rural school teachers than urban school teachers emphasized the importance of assigning beginning teachers mentor teachers and coaching each other in the classroom. One interpretation of this difference could be that since rural teachers are mostly new teachers, they might need more help and therefore they might be more open and ready to use all the resources available.

The rural school teachers are less likely to share information, instructional materials, and ideas with the other teachers who teach same grade level as they do. This may be due to the fact that there is usually only one class for each grade in rural schools so there is only one teacher teaching one particular grade. The rural school teachers are also more likely to receive informal evaluation of their teaching performance. This can be explained as there are fewer teachers in rural schools, and they may have more informal relationships.

A large number of teachers also believe that when teachers have problems, they should be able to discuss them with any teacher who might be able to help, and most of them also said they give help and support to other teachers when they have problems in their teaching. Many teachers also said that they get new teaching ideas mostly from other teachers. Female teachers show more enthusiasm for sharing information, instructional materials, teaching concerns, and ideas with other teachers. However, male teachers are more open to the idea of coaching each other in the classroom.

Significant differences in attitudes toward teacher training programs among teachers indicate that urban school teachers and teachers with 'junior college and below' education are more likely to agree that they got necessary skills from their teacher training institutions to be effective teachers. This difference could be explained by the fact that most of the rural school teachers happened to have college degrees and they are also new teachers, thus, the reason why they are less likely to believe that their pre-service training program had prepared them to be effective teachers could be because being new teachers, they may feel insecure about their teaching.

While almost all teachers believe that use of professional publications helps teachers learn about new developments in the field of education, and may help them to learn about new techniques or solutions to some instructional problems they face, only a small number of teachers reported as having access to them. Many teachers also reported that they get new teaching ideas from magazines, and most of them said that commercial publications are a big help in preparing lesson plans.

Implications for Practice

This exploratory study represents an initial step in providing data in the Turkish context which can be used in planning, organizing, and offering professional development opportunities for elementary school teachers. Therefore, it is an important contribution to the efforts to improving quality in the Turkish educational system. As shown by research (Bolin, 1987; The Holmes Group, 1986; Zumwalt, 1986;), the quality of teaching in schools cannot be improved without improving the quality of teachers. Therefore, continual professional development of teachers is crucial in school improvement efforts.

Overall, the results of the survey findings suggest that elementary school teachers in Turkey do not have either enough or sufficient access to in-service training activities. In addition, there are not many other opportunities for teachers' professional development. This is especially true for rural school teachers.

Some of the findings of this study are supported by the literature. Many teachers who participated in this study reported that they received informal evaluations of their teaching performance from other teachers. However, they also said that sometimes it was hard for them to know how they were doing in their teaching. This findings shows that either evaluations are not done through observations or the observations are not done in a structured way. Barth (1980) has similar comments in terms of classroom observations:

> Most teachers welcome classroom observers who can diagnose instructional problems and offer helpful suggestions.... Teachers who seek out this kind of assistance from other teachers, friends, coordinators, and sometimes even parents and principals, have already taken important steps toward professional growth. Consequently, the observation is likely to be profitable. (p. 166)

However, he further adds that informal observations are rarely taken seriously in public elementary schools. In the Turkish case, informal evaluations are not used as a tool for teachers' professional growth because they are not structured, and thus they are not taken seriously.

The responses of the teachers involved in the present study give rise to certain implications for decision makers in the central organization and for educational administrators regarding teachers' professional development. The findings which underscore the need for teacher development, may spur them to take measures to improve the current situation. The results of the survey findings indicate that teachers do need professional guidance to improve their teaching and they need organized ways to make use of the resources they have in their own hands.

In establishing an organized way for teachers' professional development. two related techniques could be used - mentor teaching and peer coaching. Both ways would be invaluable for teachers' professional development since both mentoring and peer coaching aim to improve communication and collaboration among teachers, facilitate teacher learning, and improve teachers' awareness of professional development (Bova & Phillips, 1984; Daloz, 1983; Gehrke, 1988; Howey, 1988; Showers, 1985; Varah et al, 1986).

These two approaches seem to be the most feasible in the Turkish context since there are not many other opportunities and resources available for teachers' professional growth. The findings of this study reveal that teachers in Turkey are willing to share their expertise and that they do want to share and help each other. However, there are not organized and structured systems to make this happen. As Darling-Hammond (1987) suggests, a formal system of teachers helping teachers is needed for improved instruction. Therefore, mentoring and peer coaching programs could create an environment in which teachers can share and exchange ideas. As stated earlier in this paper when teachers help teachers to increase their effectiveness, everyone wins, most of all, the students (Batesky, 1991).

The findings also suggest that carefully planned and widely-offered in-service training activities are critical to ensure that teachers develop professionally. Therefore, future educational administrators should organize and offer a variety of training activities that will support the professional growth of teachers. The data also implies that not only do teachers want the Ministry and Board of Education to offer more and more widely available professional development activities, but they want to be directly involved in the planning and delivery of those activities. The demographic differences suggest that MOE or BOE can not just offer one set of activities but they need to design a variety of activities that are tailored to the different needs of teachers; e.g., they might use a different approach for men vs. women, beginning vs. advanced, or rural vs. urban teachers.

The findings of this study suggest that some in-service training workshops are conducted just for the sake of formality. Some workshops are offered after hours or during the weekends when teachers are tired. In addition, sometimes necessary accommodations are not provided for participants when the activities are held far from home. Administrators should, therefore, make provisions for teachers to be released even during the school hours when they could fully concentrate on the specific activity offered. Options should be explored with the administrative staff both in the school or in the BOE to determine suitable times for professional development program during the school day.

The findings of this study also show that teachers do not apply what they learn in in-service training activities in their classrooms. However, one of the primary reasons for teachers to participate in in-service training activities is to acquire the skills which will improve their educational effectiveness in the classroom. With this in mind, organizers of in-service training activities also need to follow-up teachers so that they are doing things differently in the classroom as a direct result of the training program.

This study also provides fresh insights for elementary school supervisors in terms of their role in relation to teachers' development. Since the inspection system currently is one of the main organized ways in the Turkish educational system to improve the effectiveness of teaching practices in Turkish schools, the relationship between inspectors and teachers is vital to the

success of teacher development efforts. The findings from this study suggest that supervisors (inspectors) should not be placed in the position of directly evaluating the teachers, but they should develop supportive and non-judgmental relationship with the teachers in order to be able to help them develop professionally. Teachers do think that they need professional help, and they want it. However, they want this help in a humane and equitable way. This means constructive criticism in a non-threatening atmosphere. The findings suggest that teachers look to the administrators for the support which encourages them to be motivated and productive members of the school community. These interpersonal relationships and lines of communication are key elements in instructional leadership. In creating a community of learners the educational administrators could build self-esteem among teachers which in turn could encourage increased productivity via shared goals, and a common agenda of activities through collaborative planning and work.

It is possible to view the findings of the present study as an indication that teachers are unaware of the current trends in teachers' professional development, and that they are constricted in their perception of professional growth. Due to lack of research in the Turkish context in this area, it is hoped that the data obtained is used as a knowledge base in conducting future studies and in planning, organizing, and offering teacher development opportunities. Given the rapidly changing nature of the school environment and recent emphasis on in-service training activities, it is further recommended that additional research studies be conducted to determine the teachers' professional needs, and to find out more about teachers' expectations from the Ministry of Education in terms of the allocation of additional resources into the development of teaching and the improvement of the quality of education as a whole.

Implications for Future Research

In conclusion, this study has provided some insights about teachers' perceptions of availability and usefulness of in-service training activities in Turkey, and professional engagement among teachers in terms of their professional growth. However, this study has also brought many other questions. Some of these questions which could be investigated concerning the exploration of teachers' professional development opportunities in Turkey are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Research on improving the quality of teaching suggests that professional development of teachers is necessary to have better qualified teachers which means better teaching in the schools. Given the particular needs and demands of Turkish elementary school teachers, this study reflects an urgent need for a research model which addresses teachers' concerns and problems about their professional growth.

This study shows that the rural school teachers are less fortunate in having access to

professional development resources. In order to see how other countries solved the problems associated with the rural teachers' professional growth, a study could be conducted to find out about the current situation in other countries, for example, in US rural schools.

In this study, teachers' perception of professional development opportunities in general are explored. Gender, in particular, was found to be a significant variable in relation to many issues. Therefore, in order to get detailed information, differences between the views of female and male teachers in terms of using collaborative methods in helping each other's professional growth could be a topic for a new study.

Being observed by another individual in one's classroom could be disturbing to many teachers, no matter whether the observer is a supervisor who would evaluate them or a colleague who would do just an observation. Even though colleagues would not prepare an evaluation report, it would disturb the observed ones because their privacy would be invaded, and they could have to face failure publicly. This is a typical behavior in the school culture. It is a difficult process for even some experienced teachers. This process generates more ill-will among teachers than any other relationship-technique that could be used as professional development activities. A new study could be developed to look at creative and innovative ways to work with and evaluate teacher performance that would reduce the conflict and stress that this process incurs. This study could improve our understanding of the observation process which could lead to changes in teachers' perceptions of this important practice which in turn would help to improve teaching skills of both teachers, the observer and the observed.

The findings of this study also show that teachers with different educational backgrounds have different views about professional relationships among teachers. In order to get in depth information on this issue, differences between teachers with different levels of education in their views of sharing professional expertise could also be studied.

Another area of research derives from the suggestion made by most teachers in terms of assigning beginning teachers mentor teachers. Since the first years are the most important years in one's teaching career, as supported by research, a new study could be conducted which would look for ways to make the first year a less stressful one for new teachers. MOE could do a pilot project to see how feasible it is to assign new teachers to schools where they can work with experienced teachers for a semester or two before assigning them to their permanent schools. With such a project, new teachers, in a non-evaluative and non-threatening environment, could develop their self-esteem, and become more competent; have the opportunity to upgrade their content knowledge, and refine their instructional skills, and have a chance to apply what they have learned in the college without doubts that what they are doing is right and applicable. Experienced teachers who participate in this project could also get new ideas from new teachers and also could be rewarded by receiving stipends.

A similar project could be conducted by MOE or/and BOE to implement peer coaching

practices in schools. This study found that teachers are willing to help each other and to share their experiences, ideas and instructional materials. However, it was also found that teachers are not practicing what they believe in for various reasons. Because peer coaching does not require administrators to allocate any financial resources, except the training of people who will help others to practice this technique, it would be feasible in the Turkish context since there are not many other opportunities available for teachers' professional development. MOE and BOE could introduce this technique to teachers in pilot schools and publish the results through different means, for example, the press, TV, video, etc.

A focus group, which allows for discussion of issues among the group members might be another technique to use. Participants in such a group might not share very personal concerns but it would be the beginning of a discussion that could build collegiality since could hear about the common problems they face. This technique allows participants to react to the comments made by others and can provide a rich source of data.

Finally, more needs to be known with regard to the perspectives of the administrators in the MOE and BOE. Studying teachers' perceptions of professional development opportunities as part of improving the quality of teaching efforts can fill the gap between research and practice on staff development and school improvement. Interviews with the administrators in the Ministry of Education and organizers of the in-service training activities in the In-service Division of MOE could be conducted to also get their perspective on the issue of professional development of teachers.

Conducting interviews with the administrators from the City Board of Education could be the subject of another study to obtain the perspectives of the local administrators. Problems experienced by administrators and their perceptions of teachers' problems, and their possible suggestions for all those issues could be documented. Studies in these areas would also help the decision makers understand the possible relationships between theories on improving the quality of education in our schools and the professional development of teachers.

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